

REMARKS

SPECIFICATION

The specification has been amended as required by the Examiner.

DRAWINGS

Figures 4 - 14 have been amended and are submitted herewith.

CLAIMS

The rejection of the claims under 35 USC 102 and 103 is respectfully traversed.

With respect to claim 2, Applicants readily agree that Time-To-Live fields are known, but point out that claim 2 defines a new use of the field.

In the past, the network stops forwarding a packet when its TTL field is decremented to zero and returns the header and the first eight bytes to the originating address, which then resends it or takes other action. Claim 2 defines a new use for the returned packet - it is the means of verifying that the transformation on the packet has been performed successfully.

Thus, according to claim 2, the returned header is not used as information that the transmission failed, but is used as the vehicle for verifying or validating that the transformation in question has been performed successfully. This is a new use for the TTL field, not suggested or shown by the various references.

With respect to claim 3, Applicants cannot find in the cited passage (Col. 10, lines 50 - 65) any teaching or suggestion of establishing a network device level socket. Claim 3 requires the creation of a new software structure that examines packets passing through it and returns a copy of a transformed packet. Support is provide in Figure 10 and the associated discussion.

Thus, Applicants maintain that claim 3, as amended, is allowable over the cited art.

With respect to claim 4, a dummy interface is an alternative to the device socket. Similarly to claim 3, a new structure is set up that is not found in a conventional tunnel (i.e. a dummy interface that sends back the packet it receives during the validation step). Applicants readily agree that dummy interfaces are known, for carrying out various purposes, but maintain that this method of validation is not suggested by the references.

With respect to claim 6, an alternative approach is specified in which a software structure is added to the network to perform validaiton when the tunnel covers only part of the path between end stations. A network device, in this case a router, is configured to perform this additional function.

With respect to claim 11, Applicants point out that the claim, as amended, requires that the originator go through the validation process and then that the selected other

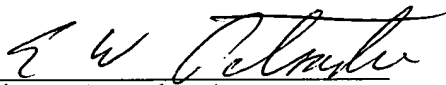
participant in the tunnel go through a parallel process, both with new software structures, not that the other unit simply echo the packets that it receives.

Claims 14 - 20 stand with the antecedent claims.

For the foregoing reasons, allowance of the claims is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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